

**FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE FREE ZONE - BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE
ON REGIONALIZATION**

Statement by Brazil at the meeting of 29-30 June 2005

The following communication, dated 1 July 2005, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Brazil.

1. By the end of 2004, Brazil had 4.2 million Km², which represents approximately 50 per cent of the national territory, recognized by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) as free of foot and mouth disease (FMD) with vaccination. The Brazilian FMD-free zone comprises 75 per cent of the country's total bovine farms and 84 per cent of the bovine national population. By the end of 2004, the Brazilian FMD-free zone was composed of 15 states. In May 2005, Brazil reached another important victory in its struggle against FMD: the OIE International Committee, recognizing Brazil's serious efforts against FMD, approved the inclusion of the Acre State in the Brazilian FMD-free zone.
2. Almost 40 years of Brazilian Government efforts against FMD made possible the results harvested today. However, the great achievements were reached only after the effective mobilization of other sectors of the civil society. In 1992, professionals of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply, the Agriculture Secretariat in the states, and members of the cattle breeding production chain, with the support of the Pan-American Foot and Mouth Disease Center (PANAFTOSA), revised the strategies against FMD. They adopted an eradication goal, supported by the strengthening of the veterinary surveillance system; implementation of local veterinary units; registration of rural properties and animals; compulsory vaccination every six months; compulsory notification of any suspicion of FMD; attentions to outbreaks; sanitary slaughter in case of outbreaks; and other measures related to surveillance of FMD.
3. After a successful implementation of these measures, Brazil obtained, in 1998, the recognition of its first FMD-free zone, comprised by the Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina states. The cumulative knowledge and the continuous adaptation of the regional protection systems made possible the gradual enlargement of the Brazilian FMD-free zone.
4. Brazil's serious efforts resulted in the current, highly secured, FMD-free zones. These have been established with huge protection areas ("buffer zones") based on natural and geographical barriers, official quarantine and animal movement control, and a vaccination coverage of approximately 95 per cent of the whole country's cattle population.

5. According to our experience, increasing market access opportunities for FMD susceptible species and their products encourages the implementation of FMD-free zones. Considering this, it is uncontested that enlargement of our FMD-free zone has contributed to improve exports of these products, despite political and economic factors. Taking the exports of fresh bovine meat as an example, we found a direct correlation between the enlargement of the FMD-free zone and the increase in the number of importing countries. The increase in the number of importing countries is also highly correlated to the increase of the amount (in weight) of fresh bovine meat exported.

6. By the end of 1998, considering the OIE's recognition of Brazil's first FMD-free zone with vaccination, the number of importing countries was 36. In 2003, Brazil exported to 80 countries. In 2004, despite the fact that there wasn't any enlargement of the FMD-free zone, an increase in the number of importing countries was noted. Brazil now exports to 109 countries.

7. However, in spite of the sanitary status of Brazilian cattle and the large number of importing countries that confirms this condition, only two of the seven major bovine fresh meat importers (which account for more than 50 per cent of the world market) buy from Brazil. Even these two countries that are open to Brazilian meat exports apply trade restrictions related to FMD, including lack of harmonization of national requirements to international standards. Considering the other five major importers, restrictions are related to the lack of recognition of FMD-free areas where vaccination is practiced, delays in the publication of risk analysis and the establishment of importing requirements.

8. It should be underlined that Brazil always fulfills the OIE's criteria for the establishment of FMD-free zones, including those related to vaccine production, surveillance and quarantine actions. Therefore, one can draw the conclusion that the most important restriction for Brazil's exports of fresh bovine meat is still the lack of recognition of Brazil's FMD-free zone, established in accordance with OIE standards.

9. Considering the difficulties for the recognition of FMD-free zones by other Members, Brazil is of the view that OIE standards should be observed by importing countries.

10. The SPS Committee should accurately separate administrative procedures from the OIE scientific work. Clear definitions supported by practical examples will help Members to distinguish between these. The SPS Committee should focus its efforts in the production of guidelines to avoid undue delays related to administrative procedures in the recognition of regionalization.
